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INFORMATION
January 22, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KISSINGER

FROM: Helmut Sonnenfeldt

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SUBJECT: More on Brandt's Declaration on Vietnam

We now have two reports which give more background on Brandt's reference to Vietnam in his January 18 declaration to the Bundestag, about which I sent you a memorandum last Friday (Tab C - Log #294).

Separately, our Embassy in Bonn has learned (Tab B) that prior to speaking in the Bundestag Brandt told the SPD Parliamentary group that:

-- the most important thing is for the war to end;

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GDS-Dec. 31, 1981

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-- It was incorrect to accuse the Federal Government of not expressing its position in Vietnam, since there had been various speeches at Christmas and New Years by SPD personalities and by Schmidt in the United States;

-- It had not been easy for him to remain silent but the interests of the Federal Republic had clear precedence for him.

RGL:mmm

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SUBJECT: FRG STATEMENTS ON VIETNAM

1. ON JANUARY 17 CHANCELLOR BRANDT MADE STATEMENT ON THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON VIETNAM TO AN SPD BUNDESTAG FRAKTION MEETING. AS IN HIS GOVERNMENT DECLARATION (SEPTEL), BRANDT SAID THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR US THAT THE WAR IN SOUTHEAST ASIA FINALLY COMES TO AN END. HE SAID IT WAS INCORRECT TO SAY THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAD NOT EXPRESSED ITS POSITION ON VIETNAM DURING THE LAST WEEKS. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE MENTIONED THE VARIOUS CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S SPEECHES OF SPD PERSONALITIES AND THE REMARKS OF FINANCE MINISTER SCHMIDT IN THE US. BRANDT EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING FOR THE CRITICISM THAT HE HIMSELF HAD NOT MADE A STATEMENT ON VIETNAM AT CHRISTMAS TIME AND ADDED THAT IT HAD NOT BEEN EASY FOR HIM TO REMAIN SILENT. BRANDT SAID HE HAD ACCEPTED THE CONSIDERABLE AND UNFAIR CRITICISM RESULTING FROM HIS SILENCE, BECAUSE THE INTERESTS OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC AS HE RECOGNIZED THEM AND REPRESENTED THEM IN FULL RESPONSIBILITY, HAD TO HAVE CLEAR PRECEDENCE FOR HIM.

2. COMMENTS: BRANDT'S STATEMENT TO THE SPD FRAKTION INDICATES THE PRESSURE HE FEELS FROM WITHIN HIS PARTY AND HIS NEED TO BALANCE THE MILDER STATEMENT IN THE

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GOVERNMENT DECLARATION WITH SOMETHING STRONGER FOR
DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION. SOS-MILLENBRAND

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